

## BROADCAST 4975

DATE: June 6, 2008

TO: Local Eligibility and Issuance Managers, Supervisors and Workers in Food Stamp Program; EBT Coordinators

FROM: Thomas Steinhauser, Director, Division of Benefit Programs

SUBJECT: New Food Stamp Card Issuance Functionality

TIME: 9:11 a.m.

CATEGORY: EBT

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The following acronyms are used in this broadcast:

ACS – Affiliated Computer Services  
ARU – Automated Response Unit  
EBT – Electronic Benefits Transfer  
EPPIC – Electronic Payment Processing Information Control  
PIN – Personal Identification Number

While it took a little longer than anticipated due to multiple problems identified during testing, I am pleased to announce that effective June 11, 2008, local agency card issuance staff will be able to set up an account in EPPIC and issue an EBT card after a food stamp application is approved in ADAPT, but before the demographic and benefit files are transmitted from ADAPT to EPPIC. The inability to issue EBT cards prior to transmission of the demographic file had created operational issues for many local agencies and had raised concerns about the ability to issue EBT cards quickly in the event of a disaster.

All local EPPIC users who have a profile with update capability will be able to access this new functionality. The Eligibility Staff must continue to authorize the Issuance Unit to issue a vault card using the Internal Action Form, and note the time of case approval so the issuer will know the batch in which the files should be transmitted.

The User Guide has been updated with the following information which can be found on pages 25-26:

## Manual Account Setup

This feature will be used to issue vault cards to clients prior to the demographic and benefit files being transmitted to EPPIC.

### To Setup a Manual Account:

1. On the Main Menu, click Recipient Account, then Manual Account Setup. The Manual Account Setup screen opens.

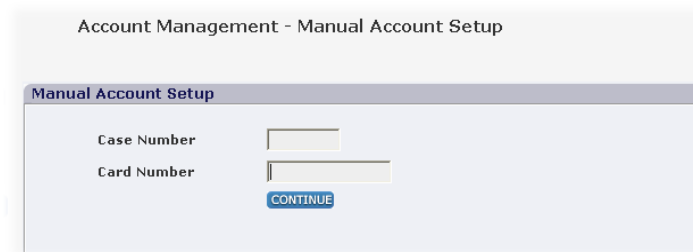


Figure 1 Manual Account Setup

2. Fill in the case number beside the **Case Number** field. Fill in the card number beside the **Card Number** field. Select **CONTINUE**.
3. A pop-up will appear, confirming that you want to proceed with this action. Select **OK**.



Figure 2 Manual Account Setup Pop-Up

4. Another pop-up will appear, confirming that the account has been set-up.



Figure 3 Manual Account Setup Pop-Up II

Please be advised that the Manual Account Setup feature can only be used if the case number and/or card number does not already appear in EPPIC. Upon transmission, if either number already exists in EPPIC, an error message will display notifying the user that the case number or card number is a duplicate of a number which is already in EPPIC. Please note that for reapplications, a vault card can be issued immediately as the client demographics already exist in EPPIC.

It is imperative that issuance staff educate the customer so that they understand when the card they are receiving is usable. The local agency must explain to the client that he or she will not be able to select a PIN through the ARU, or have benefits on the card to spend until the demographic and benefit batches transmit. Communication between issuance and eligibility staff concerning the applicable batch processing times is essential.

It is important to note that this new feature is an option. Numerous agencies indicated that they did not want to change the card issuance process.. Those agencies can continue to wait for the accounts to appear in EPPIC prior to authorizing the release of a vault card.

Thanks to all state and local staff who took part in the discussions which led to the development of the Manual Account Setup feature. Your input and suggestions have resulted in better customer service and delivery of benefits to the citizens of the Commonwealth. Please call the above mentioned EBT staff with any questions about this new functionality.